road sector. There is no long term strategy for augmentation of vehicle registration fee.

(f) Government has recently taken steps for speedy implementation of National Highway Projects by simplifying the land acquisition procedure and the exemption of clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forest for the improvement of existing National Highways.

U.S. Policy on Kashmir

2260. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent statement of the Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Robin Raphel that the elections in Jammu & Kashmir have not resolved the issue and that Kashmir remains a disputed territory for the U.S. Government;

(b) if so, whether her statement reflect U.S. policy on Kashmir; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Goverment thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b) Government have seen press reports regarding remarks on elections in Jammu & Kashmir reportedly made by US Assistant Secretary Robin Raphel in her interaction with the press during her visit to India in February 1997. This subject was not discussed in the official meetings during the visit.

(c) Government of India has made it clear that Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India. This position is well known to the US Government.

Foreign Trips by Prime Minister

2261. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES :
SHRI JAYSINH CHAUHAN :
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH :
SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT :
SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of foreign trips undertaken by the Prime Minister since the assumed office and the purpose of these trips;

(b) the details of the non-official persons who accompanied him during these trips;

(c) the total expenditure, if any incurred by the Government on those non-official persons;

(d) whether these expenses have been recovered; and

(e) if so, the head of account under which the money was paid in the first instance?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) The foreign trips undertaken by the Prime Minister since he assumed office are listed below.The purpose of each trip is also indicated.

(1) Zimbabwe - for the G-15 Summit held in Harare

(2) Italy - for the World Food Summit held in Rome

(3) Bangladesh - Bilateral Visit

(4) Switzerland - for the World Economic Forum meeting held in Davos

(5) Mauritius - Bilateral Visit

(b) On all the tours listed above, the Prime Minister was accompanied by members of the official delegation, security personnel and other officials as well as representatives of the media. Smt. Deve Gowda accompanied him on the visits to Harare, Rome and Davos and Mauritius. Members of the PM's family also accompanied him on the visits to Harare and Rome.

(c) to (e) Expenses on the members of the Prime Minister's family and the non-official media were directly settled by the persons concerned. Government did not incur any expenditure on non-official persons.

Facilities to Ex-Servicemen

2262. SHRI MURALIDHAR JENA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Ex-servicemen who are re-employed in Central Government jobs after their retirement are given any special opportunity to post them in their home States;

(b) if not, whether keeping in view of various difficulties being faced by them, the Government propose to issue guidelines for their choice transfers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c) Ex-Servicemen who seek re-employment in the Defence Services after their retirement are to the extent possible posted at the places of their choice by the respective Service Headquarters. However, ex-Servicemen who are re-employed in other Departments of Central Government are governed by the terms and conditions of Service as applicable to civilian employees of those Departments and, therefore, are treated at par with other employees in their cadre in the matter of postings and transfers.